

August 5, 2009

Committee on Foreign Relations  
United States Senate

Dear Senator:

As a member of the Committee on Foreign Relations, you are in a unique position to ensure that adequate funding to meet the needs of the most vulnerable developing nations is included in climate legislation.

As the Partner organizations of the National Religious Partnership for the Environment (NRPE), which includes the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the National Council of Churches, the Evangelical Environmental Network and the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life, we strongly support efforts in the Senate to develop and enact legislation that focuses on the moral, environmental and human dimensions of global climate change. We are convinced of the urgent need to address this serious national and global challenge, and for the United States to be an international leader on this issue.

As communities of faith, our work on climate change is grounded in the moral requirement to care for God's creation and for "the least of these." We believe that the fundamental moral measure of climate change legislation is how the poor – in our own country and around the world – are affected. Without prompt and effective action by the Senate, the poorest and most vulnerable communities and people, who contribute the least to the problem and have the least capacity to deal with its effects, will continue to suffer the most from climate change. A substantial investment in international adaptation efforts is essential both for these reasons, and in order to enable the U.S. to lead in shaping an effective global agreement.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee has the responsibility, opportunity and the expertise to understand and act on the moral and policy requirements to address international adaptation as an integral element of comprehensive climate change legislation. The leadership of this Committee will be essential to ensure adequate funding for international adaptation is available and that the United States can exercise the necessary leadership to negotiate a workable global agreement. We strongly urge you to make assistance to the most vulnerable developing nations, through a robust and well-funded international adaptation program, an essential priority in your consideration of climate legislation.

Passage of the *American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009* (H.R. 2454) is a major achievement and is an important first step toward comprehensive climate legislation. We are particularly encouraged by the provisions to assist low-income consumers and to create pathways out of poverty through good, family-supporting green jobs. However, this legislation must be improved before it reaches the President, particularly in the areas of greatest relevance to the Committee on Foreign Relations. While we strongly support the language on international

adaptation in the House legislation, we are deeply concerned that the resources allocated to these provisions fall substantially short of what is needed. A significant increase in initial funding, followed by a faster ramp-up of these resources, is crucial to ensure that the world's most vulnerable developing nations can respond to the irreversible impacts of climate change that will otherwise devastate those living in poverty around the world.

We are working to secure an allocation equivalent to \$3.5 billion annually, starting in 2012, which moves rapidly toward \$7 billion annually by 2020. This figure is based on estimates by the Framework Convention on Climate Change and a variety of development organizations together with evidence of actual needs observed by religious relief and development agencies. We firmly believe this minimum level of resources is essential to address the actual needs of the poorest people in the most vulnerable developing nations.

For the faith community, protecting those living in poverty is not a marginal concern, but rather a matter of moral and policy priority. For this reason, it is crucial that the final bill include significantly increased funding for international adaptation.

The religious community has a distinctive voice in this debate, pursuing both care for God's creation and protection of the poor and vulnerable at home and abroad. We are strong advocates for legislation that advances these priorities. As the legislative process proceeds, we look forward to working with Congress and the Administration to advance comprehensive legislation that includes significant funding for international adaptation.

Thank you for your attention to our concerns.

Sincerely yours,

Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life

Evangelical Environmental Network

National Council of Churches

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops